COST OF LIVING

67. Mr. V. J. Mathai *(Planters):* Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether the cost of living has gone up and if so how many times the pre-war level;

(*b*) whether the Dearness allowance granted to low-paid Government Officers is adequate;

(*c*) whether Government will increase the Dearness allowance already sanctioned;

(*d*) whether Government are aware that in Travancore Dearness allowances have recently been increased?

Mr. P. V. Raphael *(Comptroller of Finance and Accounts):*

(*a*) Yes. The working class cost of living Index No. for Madras City for August 1939, *i.e.*, just before the declaration of the war, was 98. For May 1943, the Index No. is 173·3.

(*b*) & (*c*) Government have now increased the dearness allowance from Rs. 4 to Rs. 6 so far as officers on a salary up to Rs. 60 are concerned.

(*d*) Yes.

LOAN TO SITARAM SPINNING AND WEAVING MILLS

68. Mr. C. V. Iyyu *(Kunnamkulam):* Will Government be pleased to state.—

(*a*) whether Government has ever given any loan to Sitaram Spinning and Weaving Mills, Ltd.;

(*b*) if so, when was it advanced;

(*c*) what was the terms if any in the mortgage deed as to the date of repayment and the rate of interest;

(*d*) whether the amount was paid back by the debtor Company;

(*e*) if so, when was it;

(*f*) whether Government had to use any coercive methods to collect this amount;

(*g*) if so, what;

(*h*) whether the managing Director of the Company of Mr. T. S. Balarama Ayyar was a Member of this House when the amount was paid back?

Mr. P. V. Raphael *(Comptroller of Finance and Accounts):*

(*a*) A loan of Rs. 3·50 lakhs had been given.

(*b*) In 1099.

(*c*) Half a lakh of rupees to be repaid on the last day of Karkadagam 1100 and the balance in annual instalments of Rs. 1·00 lakh on the last day of Karkadagam in succeeding years, interest also to be paid on the last day of Karkadagam every year. Rate of interest 7½ pe cent.

(*d*) Yes.

(*e*) The loan was completely repaid in 1111.

(*f*) No coercive method had to be used.

(*g*) Does not arise in view of answer to (*f*).

(*h*) Mr. Balarama Ayyar was a member of the Legislative Council when the amount was paid back.

CUT MOTION NO. 18 (*cont.*)

Rigorous Commandeering of paddy

***Mr. M. M. Paul** *(Director of Food Supplies):* The Hon'ble the mover of the cut motion raised some points by way of criticism. The first point that he raised was that our commandeering was a bit late. Now I have only to say that this commandeering of paddy is an important matter. The difficulty will be apparent from the fact that only in a very few places in India, this method has been adopted when owing to the acute scarcity of food stuffs the Government thought that it was necessary in public interests, as a necessary step the Government resorted to it.

The second point raised was with regard to the prevention of smuggling. The Hon'ble Member suggested that more effective methods might be taken to prevent smuggling to adjacent Travancore and British parts. Of course the suggestions given by the Hon'ble Member will be borne in mind and acted upon and I can assure the House that we are taking all possible steps to see that our paddy is being conserved for use in our State. Recently the Excise preventive staff has been strengthened for this purpose and special police arrangements are also being made

*Speech not corrected by the Hon'ble Member.

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